

What is claimed is:

1 1. A communications method comprising:
2 putting a communication from a user's terminal on hold;
3 customizing a computer program for the user; and
4 downloading the customized computer program to the terminal
5 for execution by the terminal while the terminal's communication is on
6 hold.

1 2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
2 in response to the downloading, the terminal executing the
3 downloaded program while the terminal's communication is on hold;
4 taking the communication off hold; and
5 in response to the taking, the terminal ceasing execution of the
6 downloaded program.

1 3. The method of claim 1 wherein:
2 putting the communication on hold comprises one of
3 (a) a handler of the communication putting the communication
4 on hold, and
5 (b) in response to receiving the communication, enqueueing the
6 communication until a resource becomes available to handle the
7 communication.

1 4. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
2 taking the communication off hold; and
3 prior to taking the communication off hold, alerting the user that
4 the communication is about to be taken off hold.

1 5. The method of claim 1 wherein:
2 putting the communication on hold comprises

3 negotiating with the terminal an amount of time that the
4 communication will remain on hold.

1 6. The method of claim 5 wherein:
2 customizing a computer program comprises
3 selecting a computer program that can be executed within the
4 negotiated amount of time.

1 7. The method of claim 5 wherein:
2 downloading a computer program includes
3 downloading a countdown program whose execution indicates
4 to the user progress of expiration of the negotiated amount of time.

1 8. The method of claim 7 further comprising:
2 in response to a change in conditions affecting the amount of
3 time that the communication will remain on hold, adjusting the amount of
4 time indicated by the countdown program to reflect the change.

1 9. The method of claim 1 wherein:
2 customizing a computer program comprises
3 estimating an amount of time that the communication will
4 remain on hold; and
5 selecting a computer program that can be executed within the
6 estimated amount of time.

1 10. The method of claim 9 wherein:
2 downloading a computer program includes
3 downloading a countdown program whose execution indicates
4 to the user progress of expiration of the estimated amount of time.

1 11. The method of claim 10 further comprising:

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2 in response to a change in conditions affecting the amount of
3 time that the communication will remain on hold, adjusting the amount of
4 time indicated by the countdown program to reflect the change.

1 12. The method of claim 1 wherein:
2 customizing a computer program comprises
3 selecting a presentation program, whose execution presents
4 information to the user.

1 13. The method of claim 1 wherein:
2 customizing a computer program comprises
3 selecting an interactive program whose execution causes the
4 terminal to interact with the user.

1 14. The method of claim 13 further comprising:
2 receiving from the terminal information gathered at the terminal
3 via said execution of the downloaded program.

1 15. The method of claim 1 wherein:
2 customizing a computer program comprises
3 identifying at least one of the user and the terminal; and
4 customizing the computer program for the identified at least
5 one of the user and the terminal.

1 16. The method of claim 1 wherein:
2 customizing a computer program comprises
3 identifying a universal resource locator (URL) of a Web page
4 from which the user initiated the communication; and
5 customizing the computer program for the identified URL.

1 17. The method of claim 1 wherein:

2 putting a communication on hold comprises
3 putting on hold a voice or a data call between the terminal and
4 a call center.

1 18. A communications method comprising:
2 having a communication between a user's terminal and a
3 communications entity put on hold by the communications entity;
4 receiving at the terminal a computer program customized for
5 the user from the communications entity; and
6 executing the received computer program at the terminal while
7 the communication is on hold.

1 19. The method of claim 18 wherein:
2 having a communication put on hold comprises
3 negotiating with the communications entity an amount of time
4 that the communication will remain on hold.

1 20. The method of claim 18 further comprising:
2 having the communication taken off hold by the
3 communications entity; and
4 in response, the terminal ceasing execution of the received
5 computer program.

1 21. The method of claim 20 wherein:
2 executing comprises
3 interacting with the user by executing an interactive said
4 received computer program; and
5 ceasing execution comprises
6 sending to the communications entity information gathered from
7 the user via the interacting.

1 22. The method of claim 18 further comprising:
2 having the communication taken off hold by the
3 communications entity;
4 prior to having the communication taken off hold, the terminal
5 receiving notification from the communications entity that the
6 communication is about to be taken off hold; and
7 in response, the terminal alerting the user.

1 23. An apparatus that performs the method of claim 1 or 3 or 4
2 or 5 or 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 or 12 or 13 or 14 or 15 or 16 or 17.

1 24. The apparatus of claim 23 comprising an automatic call
2 distributor.

1 25. An apparatus that performs the method of claim 18 or 19 or
2 20 or 21 or 22.

1 26. The apparatus of claim 21 comprising a user
2 communications terminal.

1 27. A computer-readable medium contain software which,
2 when executed in a computer, causes the computer to perform the
3 method of claim 1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 or 12 or
4 13 or 14 or 15 or 16 or 17 or 18 or 19 or 20 or 21 or 22.